Youth Employment:
Entering the Labour Market

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The Family Mosaic

Youth Employment:
Entering the Labour Market

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Introduction

Over the last generation, fertility rates have dropped below replacement level, the percentage of children born into single-parent families has increased substantially, divorce rates have multiplied ten-fold, and women's labour force participation rates have quadrupled (Dechman, 1995). The magnitude and speed of these changes have left us without a clear picture of what today's families really look like. Family life is both varied and dynamic. There are one and two-parent families; single and dual-earner families; blended, nuclear, and extended families. Families can be two-parent today and one-parent tomorrow; single-earner today and dual-earner tomorrow.

The Family Mosaic Project (FMP) provides policymakers, practitioners, and the public with information about the ever-changing realities of life in both one and two-parent families as children grow from infancy to adulthood. The project started over twenty years ago with a sample of 716 mothers who gave birth to their first child in a Nova Scotia hospital in 1978. The sample was stratified on the basis of marital status. Half of the mothers were married when their first child was born and half were single when their first child was born. By drawing two comparable samples of married and single mothers, it is possible to give statistically-reliable estimates of outcomes for both family types. Weighting the data to compensate for the over-representation of single mothers also makes it possible to provide information on families in general.

Data collections for this project were conducted when the children were approximately 6 weeks, 9 months, 18 months, 10 years, and 20 years of age. The 6-week, 9-month, and 18-month data collections consisted of personal interviews with the mothers. The 10-year data collection consisted of personal interviews with mothers and psychological assessments of a random sample of 223 of the children. The 20-year data collection consisted of telephone interviews with both the mothers and their sons or daughters who were, by then, young adults. Seventy percent (N=500) of the mothers who started the project in 1978 were still involved in the 1999 data collection. Eighty-six percent (N=428) of the sons/daughters of these mothers also participated in the 1999 data collection. More detailed information on the study design and associated questionnaires can be found in the Methodology Report for the Family Mosaic Project.

This report on the employment experiences of youth is part of a larger series of reports including:

The Dynamics of Family Life

Educational Profiles of Mothers

Employment Profiles of Mothers

Social Exclusion and Social Assistance

Psychological Outcomes and Coping Strategies

The Experiences of Young Adults Leaving School Early

Leaving School or Continuing: What Makes the Difference?

Policy and Research Context

There are two basic directions from which employment and unemployment have been considered - demand and supply. On the demand side of the equation, researchers examine macro-level questions about evolving labour market conditions. What factors are influencing both the number and types of jobs that are available? On the supply side of the equation, researchers focus on micro level questions about qualifications for employment and the extent to which opportunities in the labour market are fairly allocated on the basis of such qualifications. What qualifications are needed and who gets which jobs?

There are few findings that are as consistent and pervasive as the existence of inter-generational inequalities (Curtis, Grabb, and Guppy, 1999). Children who grow up in households that experience high levels of unemployment and poverty are likely to find themselves in a similar situation when they reach adulthood. How are characteristics of the home environment translated into labour market disadvantage for youth? Hence, what interventions would prove most successful in reducing such inequalities?

The human capital model is probably the most well known and intuitively understandable perspectives on the supply side of employment opportunities (Levin, 1997; Livingstone, 1997; Alexander, 1997). The basic premise is that rewards in the labour market are determined by qualifications in the form of innate capacities such as cognitive ability plus education and employment-related experience. Thus, maximizing one's personal 'worth' in the labour market is a function of investments in education, training, and skill development.

The 'war on poverty' initiatives of the 1960s in the United States (US) focused on building human capital among poor children in an effort to improve their life chances. Head Start, preschool programming, formed the corner stone of such initiatives based on early intervention (Zigler and Styfco, 1996: 134). It was believed that preschool training could compensate for disadvantages in the home by increasing children's cognitive abilities at an early age, thereby placing them on a more equal footing when entering school. While initial results from such programming were positive, long-term benefits were thrown into question when the comparative advantages exhibited by Head Start children waned during adolescence (Zigler and Styfco, 1996: 135). As a result of programming

and evaluations linked to education and employability initiatives for poor families, it became increasingly evident that the human capital model provided an incomplete foundation for socially engineering our way out of poverty.

What was it about disadvantaged families that made it so difficult to break the cycle of poverty? What was needed to enhance the success of children in the school system and to ensure that such success would translate into more positive labour market outcomes? Lewis (1966) and others undertook intensive ethnographic studies to better understand the realities of life in poor communities. As a consequence of such studies, there was a shift in emphasis from pure monetary considerations to what was called a 'culture of poverty'. The lives of poor minority groups were seen to differ from those of the majority on social as well as economic grounds. Inequality was believed to be perpetuated not only because of initial economic disadvantage but also because the norms, attitudes, and behaviours of poor families ran counter to the economic and social structures of the larger society.

While concurring that poor families exhibited different attitudes and behaviours, Wilson (1987) maintained that the 'culture of poverty' arose not from ethnic differences but rather from blocked opportunity structures. With shrinking demand, more and more youth were likely to fall into long-term unemployment and its associated negative consequences, not because they did not value or want steady employment but because they had given up. In Canada, as well as in other parts of the world, the position of youth in the labour market has been steadily deteriorating (Corak, 1998; Morissette, 1997; HRDC, 1996). The unemployment rate amongst the youngest segment of the labour force has been rising and the relative earnings of those who do manage to obtain employment have been declining.

The labour market segmentation perspective that grew in popularity during the late 1970s and early 1980s further scrutinized the functioning of labour markets by examining not only the quantity but also the quality of jobs (Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, 1982). The labour market was conceptualized as divided into relatively high paid secure central sector jobs offering higher wages, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement and insecure marginal sector jobs offering no security, low remuneration, few fringe benefits, and no opportunities for advancement. Many contemporary writers argue that the central work world, as previously conceptualized, no longer exists (Bridges, 1994). Job security is

essentially a thing of the past. Even highly skilled workers move from job to job and are encouraged to view their employment as a series of contracts. This does not, however, change the fact that there are certainly some jobs that are more desirable than others. The new economy is characterized as polarized between high skilled, high paid, knowledge-based employment and low paid nonstandard work in the service sector (Lavoie, 1998; HRDC, 1998). As technology eliminates the need for unskilled workers in many manufacturing and resource-related jobs, the poorly remunerated service sector tends to provide the only employment opportunities for those with low levels of education (HRDC, 1997: 3; Morissette, 1997: 10). Both the expanding knowledge and service sectors emphasize skills related to interpersonal relationship building, communication, and adaptability (Oman, 1996). Access to the new economy is deemed to depend as much on social as on human capital (Schuller, 2001: 23). Networking, which requires social skills and connections, is seen as a necessary asset in today's work world (Glaerer, 2001: 35).

Unfortunately, this 'brave new world' of networking, continuous learning, and constant change is leaving behind a segment of the youth population. Regardless of whether we call them the underclass, socially excluded, disengaged, disappearing, or 'status zero', there are concerns about youth who are neither employed nor involved in educational pursuits (Lavoie, 1998:19; Thiessen and Looker, 1999; Williamson, 1997). Social problems can be expected to increase as the number of youth who are unable to find productive or constructive roles in modern society grows. Those writing in the areas of social exclusion and social cohesion struggle to uncover the factors that precipitate and can be looked upon to mitigate such isolation of youth from what are considered to be socially and economically productive endeavours (MacDonald, 1997).

We have come full circle from the 'war on poverty' of the 1960s with a resurgence of interest in the poor who fall outside current labour markets. The difference is that this emphasis is now occurring in a declining, rather than expanding economy, with concerns about the breakdown of the social fabric and scrutiny of government spending driving a greater sense of urgency about getting people back to work.

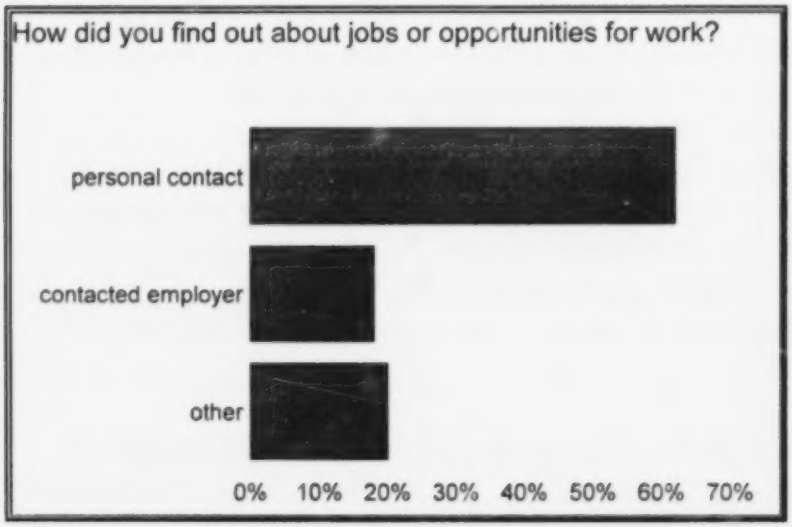
Findings from the Family Mosaic Project

This report is divided into two primary sections:

- the first, provides a descriptive overview of the youth employment situation in Nova Scotia based on pertinent family background characteristics,
- the second, examines the factors that underlie the 'disappearance' of some youth from the spheres of education and employment.

Overview of Youth Employment

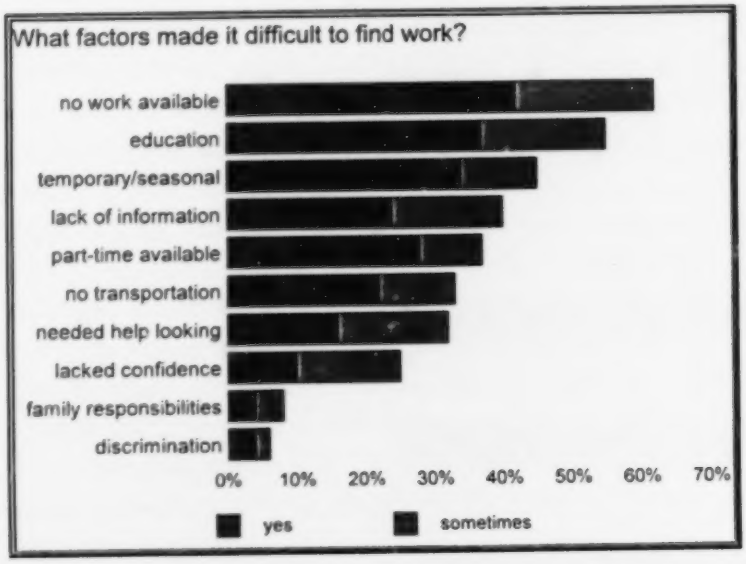
Generally speaking, youth rely heavily on personal contacts as a means of finding out about job opportunities. This method of labour force entry obviously depends, to a large extent, on the youth's social capital which draws primarily from the family. Those youth whose families are well positioned in the labour market have more and/or more beneficial contacts upon which to draw. Thus, such informal methods could be expected to reinforce existing inequities. Youth who leave the school system before grade 12 are particularly likely to rely on personal contacts to inform them of available employment (Appendix A, Chart 1). These early school leavers also stress personality as the primary attribute that worked in their favour in terms of actually securing a job (Appendix A, Table 1). Further indicating a lack of emphasis on the formal job search process, only three percent of early school leavers, as compared to 13 percent of those who completed grade 12, indicated that their success in



obtaining employment was accounted for primarily by "search effort" (Appendix A, Table 1).

What obstacles do youth perceive with respect to entering the labour market?

When presented with a list of barriers to employment, the largest percentage of young people mention conditions of the labour market as problematic, not only with respect to the total availability of jobs but also in relation to the part-time or seasonal nature of the jobs that exist. Given that both human capital development and access to employment are tied to family background characteristics, it is not surprising that youth from lone-parent homes (Appendix A, Chart 2) or where mothers have comparatively low levels of education (Appendix A, Chart 3) are more likely to indicate experiencing problems with respect to the availability of employment and educational credentials. The availability of transportation is also a distinct issue in lone-parent families or where mothers have particularly low levels of education (Appendix A, Charts 2 and 3).



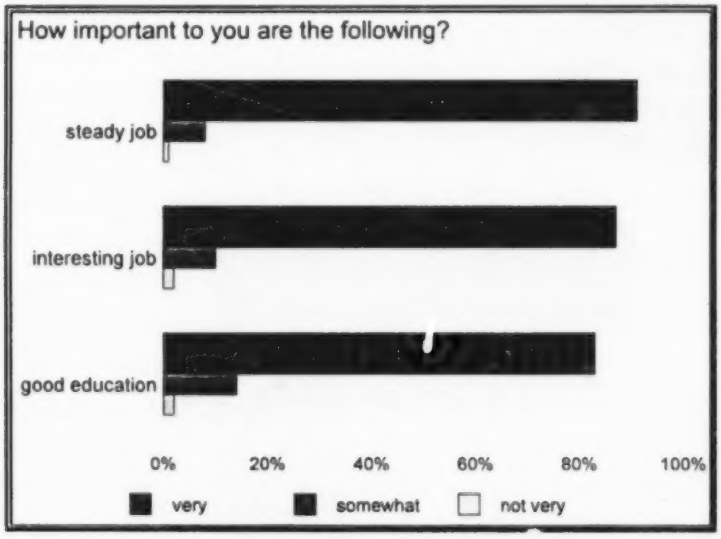
As mentioned in an earlier report from the FMP, young women who leave the school system before completing grade 12 are much more likely to have a dependent child by the time they reach their early twenties than are young women who complete grade 12. Consequently, family responsibilities figure more prominently as an obstacle to employment among early school leavers,

along with a lack of confidence, the lack of available work, and transportation issues (Appendix A, Chart 4).

When respondents were asked to choose the one main obstacle they had experienced in finding employment, availability of jobs topped the list (Appendix A, Table 2). While lack of motivation was an issue for some, this was a very small percentage (5 percent) and showed no variation with respect to family background characteristics such as mother's education, occupation, or receipt of social assistance.

What is important to youth and are they likely to achieve their goals?

Virtually all respondents in the FMP indicate that a good education and steady interesting employment are very important to them. However, respondents who had dropped out of high school did give slightly lower ratings of the importance of education than did those who had completed grade 12 (Appendix A, Chart 5). Seventy-one percent of early school leavers as compared to 85 percent of those who had completed high school indicated getting a good education was very important to them. These attitudes may be a reflection of the fact that they have already left school and as a result they may be lending some justification to their decision by reducing the importance of education (Appendix A, Chart 5).



Another difference in attitude was found when youth were questioned about their priorities in life. Those who had either dropped out of school, lived with a lone parent or whose mother had received social assistance tended to place

somewhat greater emphasis on income attainment. Fifty seven percent of those who dropped out in comparison to thirty six percent of those who completed grade 12, indicated that obtaining a high income was very important to them (Appendix A, Chart 6). Similar differentials were evident with respect to family background characteristics such as having lived in a lone-parent family (Appendix A, Chart 7) and the family's receipt of social assistance (Appendix A, Chart 8). These responses probably reflect a desire to achieve a degree of financial security lacking during their childhood.

When asked about their future expectations in the area of education, in every instance the youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds were less optimistic. Over half of the youth whose mothers completed high school in comparison to 33 percent of those whose mother completed grade 9 or less felt that they would definitely get the education they wanted (Appendix A, Chart 9). A similar trend emerges for the children of mothers who were engaged in professional versus non-skilled occupations. Sixty-eight percent of the children of mothers who worked in professional occupations indicated that they felt they would definitely get the type of education they wanted compared to only 37 percent of those whose mothers were in the unemployed or non-skilled occupation category (Appendix A, Chart 10). For those who dropped out of school before completing grade 12, 27 percent believed they definitely would get the education they wanted. Fifty-two percent of those who completed high school gave a similar response (Appendix A, Chart 11).

Future expectations about whether they would have an interesting job or a satisfactory level of income were also affected by the educational levels of both the youth themselves and their parents (Appendix A, Charts 12 to 15). In families where both mothers and youth have comparatively high levels of education, there is much more optimism about the youth's potential for success in the labour market. Forty one percent of youth who had completed grade 12 in comparison to 32 percent of youth who had left school, believed they would definitely achieve their occupational aspirations.

What kinds of jobs are youth obtaining?

The vast majority of jobs obtained by youth in today's labour market are in sales, labourer, restaurant, or other service work. These types of jobs are typically characterized by low pay and few fringe benefits.

Youth involved in the FMP earned an average of $240 per week, with one quarter falling under $115 per week.

- Only 20 percent had paid vacation.
- 16 percent had paid sick leave.
- 24 percent were eligible for a medical insurance plan through their employer.
- 8 percent were members of an employer-sponsored pension plan.

While those who have pursued post-secondary education can look upon such jobs as a temporary means of financial support, those who lack post-secondary, or in some cases even secondary, credentials have little hope of ever moving into better positions. Whether one considers such jobs from the perspective of the dual labour market or occupational segregation, the future job prospects of youth who lack even basic educational credentials are dim. While, in the past, some young men were able to secure relatively steady employment offering a living wage without much education, the availability of such jobs is rapidly shrinking with the decline of the fishery and other primary resource industries (Dechman, 1995). Whether past or present, employment prospects for young women with low levels of education are dismal (Dechman, 1995).

Youth Who Fall Outside the Labour Market

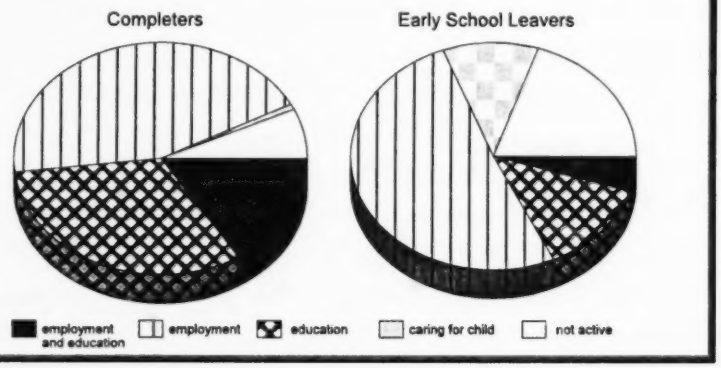
As described in the introduction, there is substantial concern about what is going to happen to young people who fall outside the new economy. This section provides a multi-variate analysis of factors underlying the emergence of 'status zero' youth. What

do we know about the lives of youth who have not been able to make a place for themselves in either educational or employment spheres?

An examination of the general life courses of youth since leaving the secondary school system demonstrates that the vast majority of their time is still allocated to either education and/or employment. Ninety percent of the cumulative time of youth since leaving secondary school was spent in either educational or employment endeavours.

Whereas youth on average spend only approximately 10 percent of their time outside the spheres of education or employment, this 'downtime' is much more prevalent among early school leavers. Those who completed grade 12 subsequently spent only 8 percent of their time without gainful employment or educational activities. While those who left school before completing grade 12 also spent most of their time involved in employment, upgrading, or other training (69 percent), they spent a much greater proportion of time outside the education/employment spheres (31 percent). Much of the difference between the activities of early school leavers and school completers relates to the investment of time in subsequent educational pursuits. Early school leaving has long-term repercussions on the development of educational credentials. A significant component of the time school completers send on post-secondary education shifts into the child rearing category for school leavers.

On average, early school leavers have spent approximately one third of their time since leaving school with neither employment nor educational pursuits.



The stepwise regression results presented in the table on the following page demonstrate how various sets of factors add to our understanding of youth disengagement from employment and education. These factors have been divided into five sets beginning with characteristics of the home environment,

moving through social capital and social exclusion, to perceived labour demand, human capital accumulation, and family responsibilities. The dependent variable under examination is the proportion of time since first leaving school that youth in their early twenties have spent neither engaged in employment nor education, that is, essentially outside the economic sphere.

Stepwise multiple regression examining factors influencing youth disengagement from the economic sphere of education/employment

	Model ßetas				
	1	2	3	4	5
Family Background					
percentage of time in two-parent vs one-parent family	-.11*	-.08	-.06	-.04	-.01
mother's total years of education	-.19***	-.21***	-.19***	-.12*	-.10*
mother ever received social assistance	.15**	.12*	.13	.04	.04
mother's total years of employment	.07	.05	.06	.07	.06
Social Capital and Social Exclusion					
youth's involvement in community activities		-.16**	-.16**	-.07	-.04
mother's involvement in community activities		.07	.07	.07	.07
youth's assessment of relationship with school personnel		.01	.01	.09	.03
mother's assessment of youth as a difficult teenager		.20***	.20***	.11*	.06
Availability of Employment					
youth's perception of lack of available jobs			.19***	.11*	.09
Human Capital					
youth's total years of education				-.37***	-.31***
employment during summer when in school				-.26***	-.23***
Family Responsibilities					
dependent child					.33***
R^2	.10*	.16**	.20***	.35***	.44***
Change in R^2		.06*	.04*	.15**	.09**

Unweighted N = 309

Consistent with much other research, Model 1 demonstrates a significant effect of family background characteristics on the employment/educational prospects of youth. Young people who come from low socio-economic backgrounds are likely to experience distinctly less success in educational and/or employment domains than are young people who have more resources upon which to draw.

Model 2 moves outside basic structural characteristics of the family to introduce considerations of social capital and social exclusion:

- the mother's involvement in community activities
- the youth's involvement in community groups and activities
- the youth's perception of teacher's support and encouragement through the school system, and
- the mother's perception of the teen as being problematic in the home setting.

Overall, these measures provide a picture of the relative social integration of the youth at home, at school, and in the larger community. While such factors make a unique contribution to understanding the employment patterns of youth with a significant increase in the amount of explained variance, they do little to diminish the effects of original socio-economic factors.

Although the FMP design could not address questions of labour demand, the young people themselves were questioned about what they perceived to be their main obstacles to obtaining employment. As mentioned earlier, the availability of jobs topped the list. An index of perceived job opportunities also showed up in Model 3 as being a significant contributor of the general life patterns of youth over and above considerations of socio-economic status and social capital.

While human capital in the form of education and work experience may not be a sufficient condition to guarantee success, it is a necessary condition for keeping youth actively engaged in the economic sphere. As described in the introduction to this section, much of the difference in the lives of early school leavers and those who held a secondary school certificate related more to differences in the percentage of time spent on educational pursuits than to the percentage of time for which the young person was employed. In keeping with research conducted by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC, 1997:11), it is also evident that summer employment provides an important means of facilitating the continued involvement of youth in the labour/education market once they have

left secondary school. As demonstrated in Model 4 the effects of family background characteristics on the employment prospects of youth are primary mediated through human capital development. Youth who have low levels of social and financial capital in their families accumulate fewer years of schooling. Rather than exhibiting increased labour force participation, youth who do not pursue post-secondary studies, or in some cases do not even complete high school, tend to spend more time outside any economically productive activity. The effects of perceived job opportunities also hinge to a large extend on the young persons credentials with respect to educational attainment and work experience.

Furthermore, economic activity cannot be separated from other social constraints. Child bearing has a pronounced impact on the percentage of time young people have spent in either educational or employment pursuits by their early twenties. As this research and other studies have repeatedly shown, family responsibilities continue to limit the educational and employment prospects of women (Sewell, Hauser and Wolf, 1980). While a few young fathers took time away from educational and employment endeavours to care for their children, this was primarily the experience of mothers.

Gender specific regression analyses demonstrate that educational attainment and summer employment counteract the probability of disengagement among both young men and young women, with (ßetas of -.34*** and -.26*** for young men) and (ßetas of -.31*** and -.19*** for young women). The primary difference relates to the effects of dependent children, with ßetas of .44*** for young women and -.02 for young men. As mentioned in the earlier report on social assistance usage, very few young men assume responsibility for dependent children and those who do usually continue to rely on the child's mother as the primary care giver. In rare cases where young men are single parents, their educational and labour force patterns tend to be comparable to those of female single parents.

Results from the FMP and much US research have demonstrated that early child bearing cannot be understood outside the economic and social context within which the young person is situated (Sherwood-Hawes and Thompson, 1996: 187). Attempts to improve the position of young parents must begin through more concerted efforts to keep young people involved in the school system. While having a child at an early age makes it more difficult to obtain sufficient

educational credentials to meet the demands of today's labour market, two-thirds of the young mothers in the FMP had left the school system before becoming pregnant. Therefore, efforts to improve the human capital and employment prospects of these women must start long before they assume the responsibilities of child rearing. A companion report from the FMP describes the process of early school leaving and the most fruitful directions for enhancing educational achievement. Not only does early school leaving greatly enhance the probability that a young woman will have a dependent child by the time she reaches her early twenties but results from the Mother's Employment Profiles report of FMP indicate that low educational attainment rather than early child bearing has the most prolonged detrimental effects on the economic and social well being of both mothers and their children.

Summary of Key Points

- Youth often rely on informal social networks to help them locate and obtain employment.

- Consequently, there are significant inter-generational effects of labour market success. Those youth whose parents have higher levels of human and social capital are likely to be better positioned to enter the labour force.

- Education is critically important to finding a place in today's economy.

- It is not uncommon for youth who leave the school system before completing grade 12 to find themselves with neither educational nor employment prospects.

- The effects of family background on the employment prospects of youth are primarily mediated through educational achievement and work experience.

- Youth who left the school system before completing grade 12 subsequently spent almost one third of their time neither involved in educational nor employment pursuits.

- While educational attainment has a direct effect on future prospects of youth, it also has an indirect effect mediated through early child bearing.

Discussion

There is no substitute for at least a basic secondary education in today's labour market. While the FMP report on early school leaving demonstrates that enhancing educational credentials is likely to be a complicated undertaking, without improvements in this area, both the early school leavers themselves and the larger social and economic systems of which they are a part are likely to experience increasingly entrenched difficulties.

Irrespective of educational attainment, the negative labour force consequences of family responsibilities that were exhibited by the mothers in this study over the past 20 years are still evident today. An earlier report from the FMP indicated that mothers who started child rearing with low levels of education were unlikely to catch up with their more highly educated counterparts. Daughters who now have small children also report that their family responsibilities represent a significant barrier to employment. Family friendly educational and workplace policies are required if parents are to successfully fulfil both their child rearing and employment roles.

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Appendix A

Chart 1

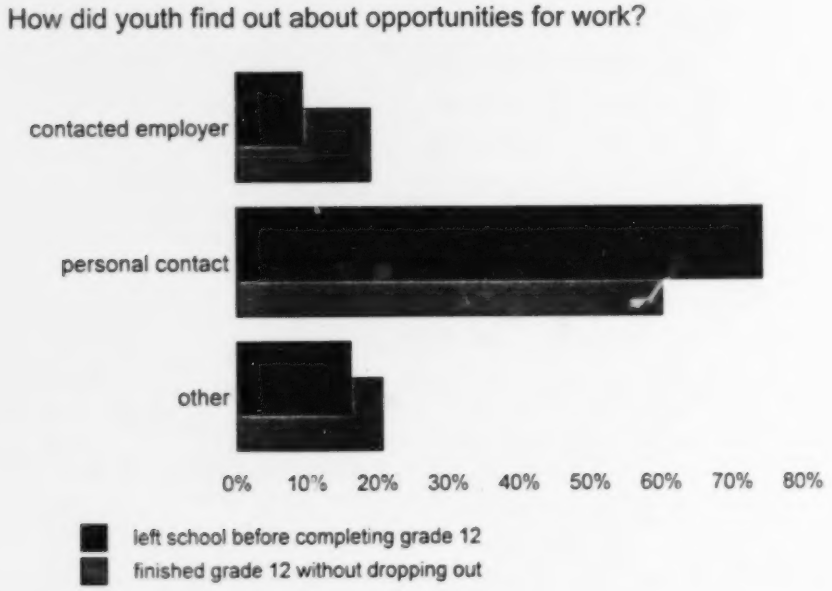


Table 1

What factors worked in your favour when you were trying to get work? (%)		
	Finished grade 12 without dropping out	**Left school before completing grade 12**
Personal contacts	45.7	36.8
Personality	24.8	50.3
Education/skills	19.8	12.2
Experience	15.5	15.0
Search effort	13.4	3.0
Work ethic	10.4	6.0

Chart 2

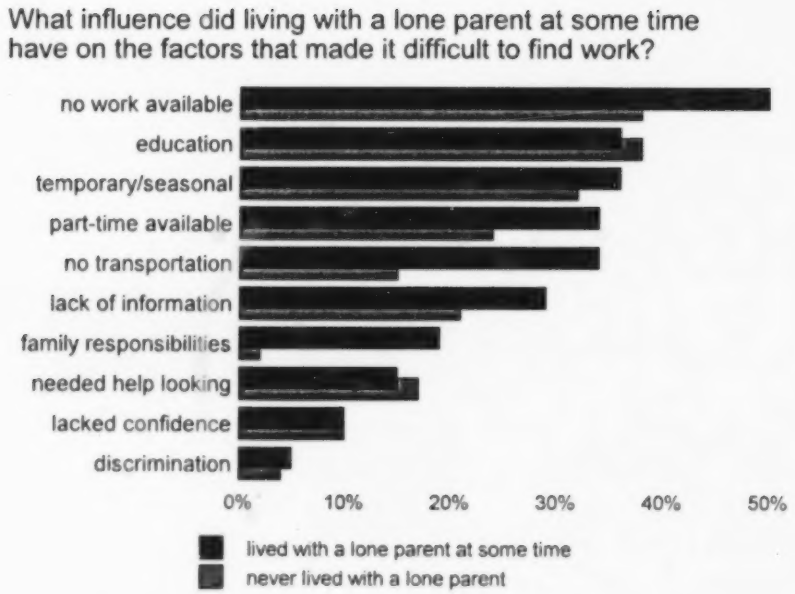


Chart 3

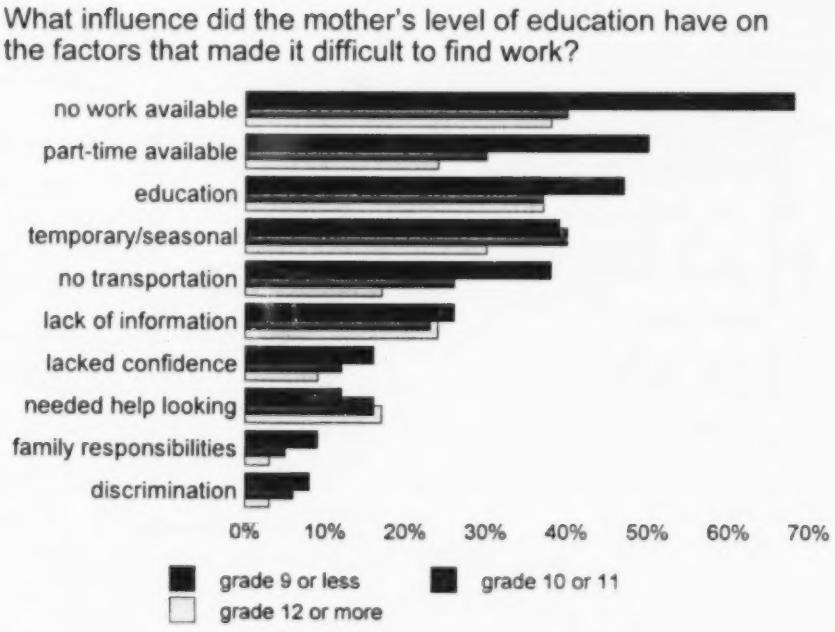


Chart 4

What influence did dropping out of school have on the factors that made it difficult to find work?

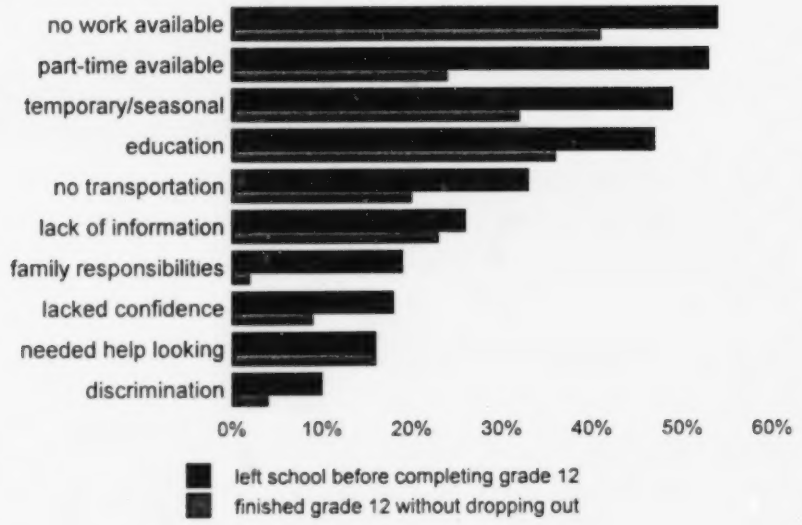


Table 2

What was the main difficulty you faced when you were trying to get work? (%)	
Hard to find suitable employment	38%
Lack of experience	12%
Lack of information about available jobs	10%
Location	9%
Lack of education	7%
Lack of motivation	5%
Lack of connections	4%
Lack of confidence	4%
Discrimination	4%
Personal preferences	3%
Family/child responsibilities	2%
Criminal record	1%
Other	1%

Chart 5

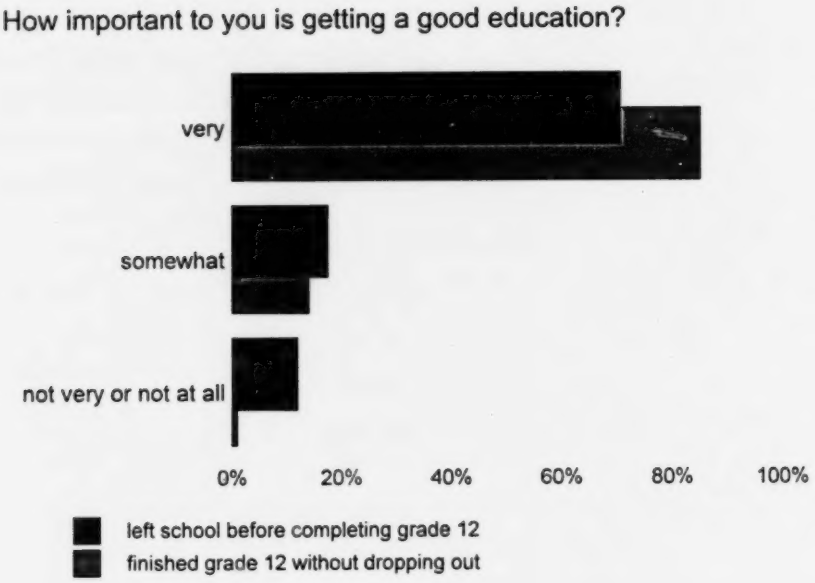


Chart 6

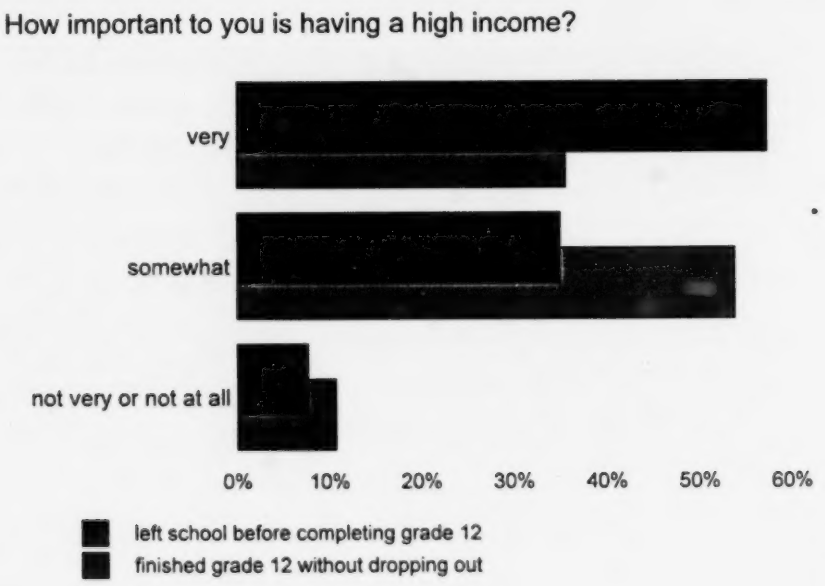


Chart 7

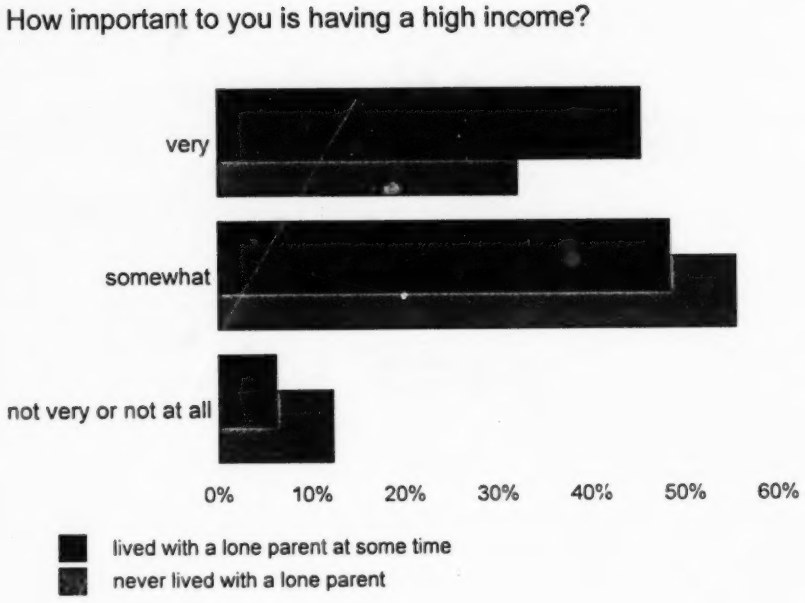


Chart 8

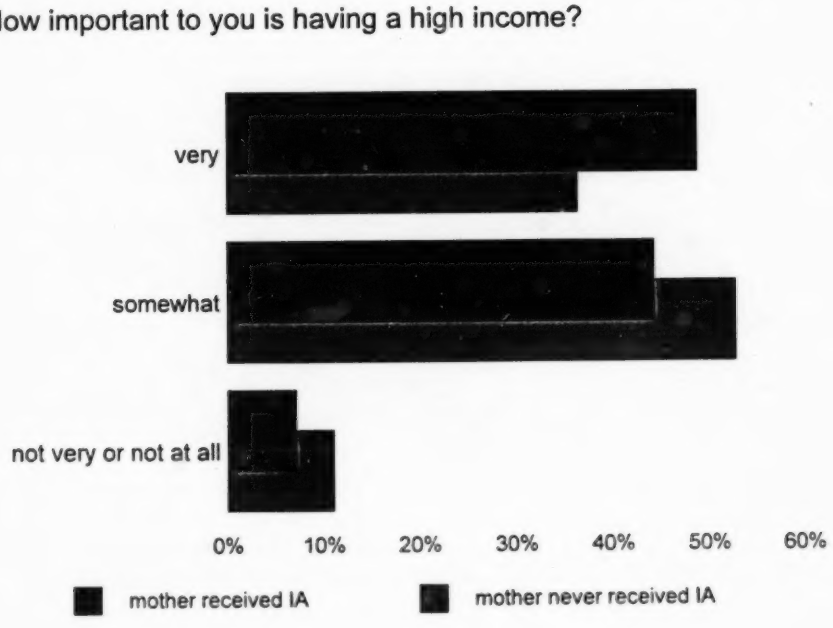


Chart 9

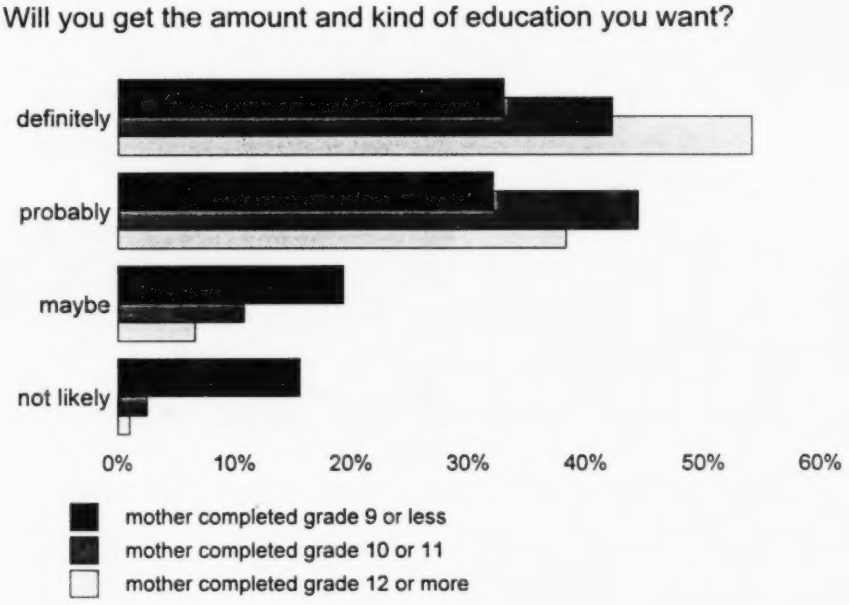


Chart 10

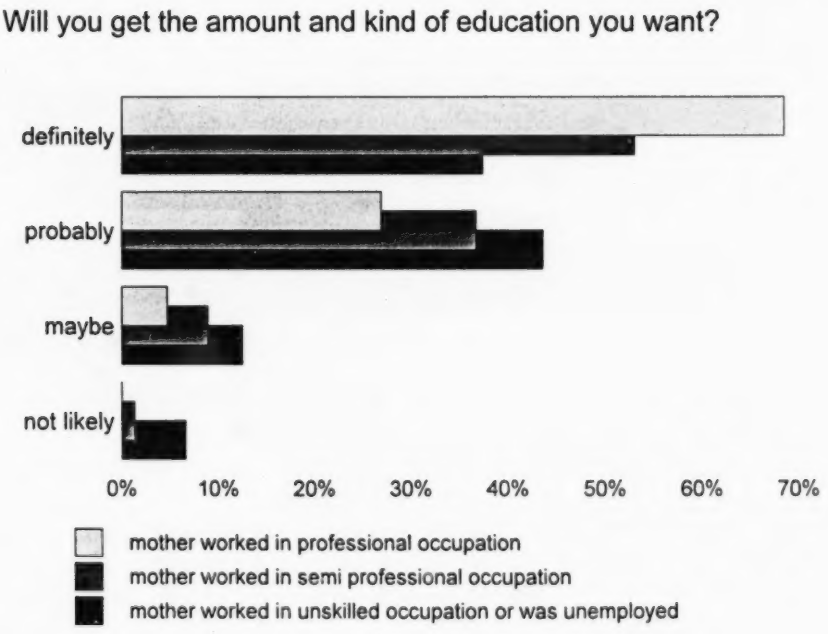


Chart 11

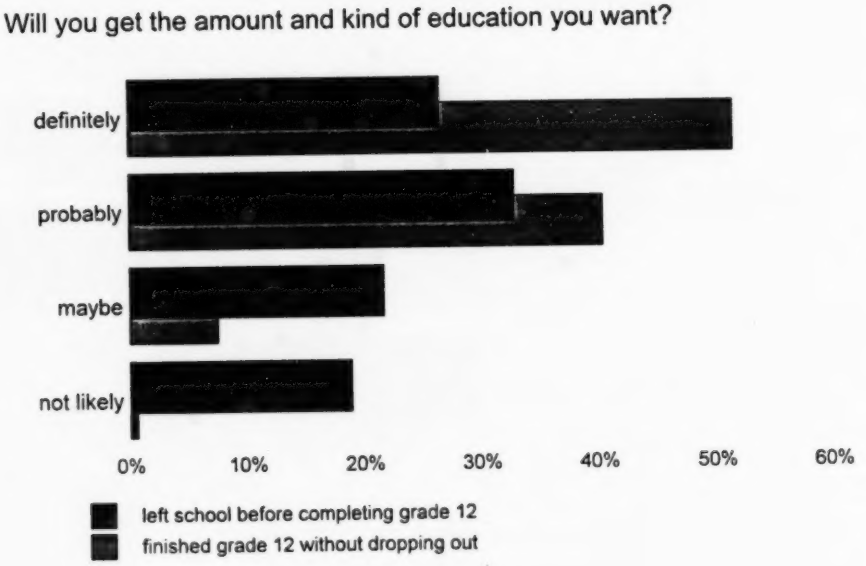


Chart 12

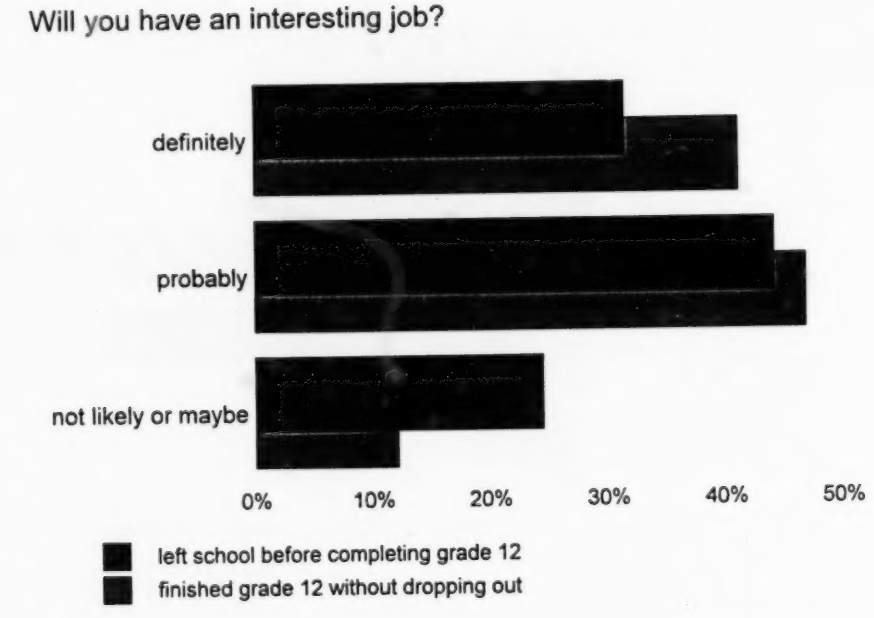


Chart 13

Will you have an interesting job?

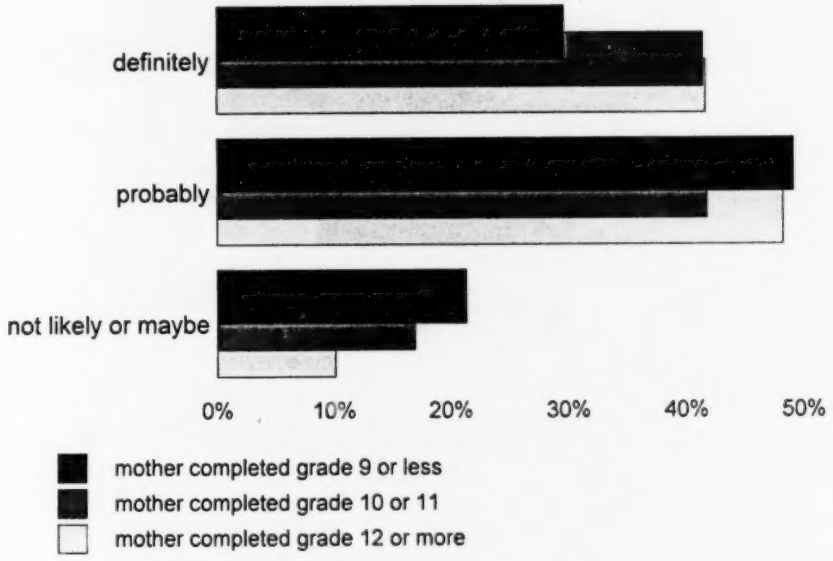


Chart 14

Will you have the amount of income you want?

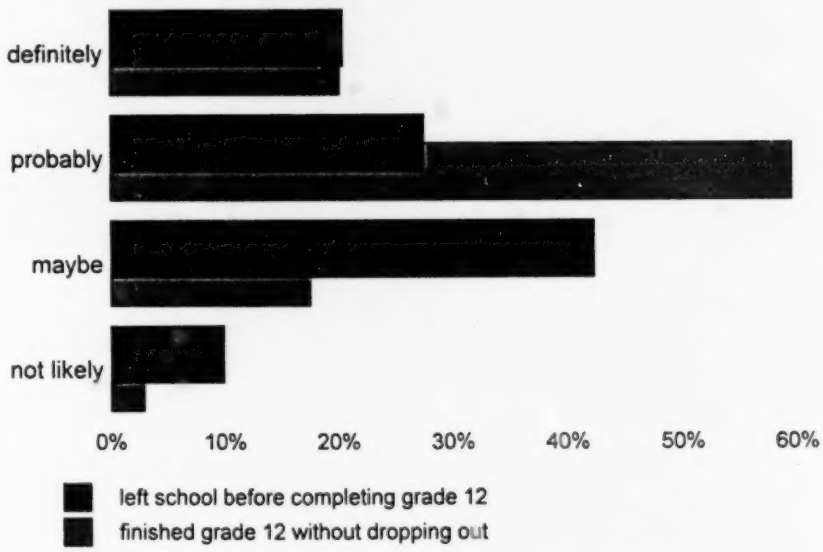
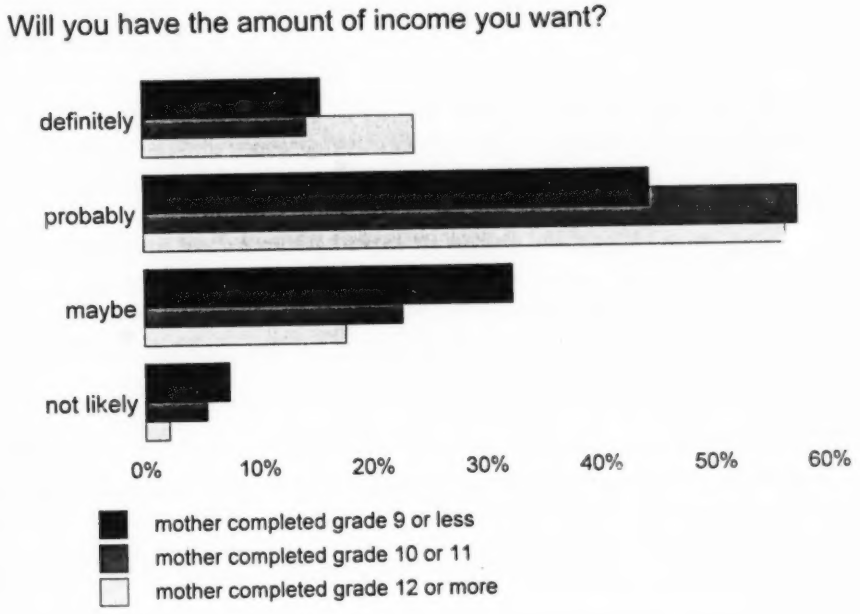


Chart 15


Will you have the amount of income you want?
definitely
probably
maybe
not likely
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
mother completed grade 9 or less
mother completed grade 10 or 11
mother completed grade 12 or more

Appendix B

Operational Definitions of Concepts

Percentage of time spent living in two-parent versus one-parent family refers the percentage of the young person's life before 18 years of age spent living in a two-parent family, including both biological and step parents.

Each data collection phase of the FMP included discussions of the type of education and training that had been pursued by the mother. The **mother's educational attainment** is operationalized as the total number of years of education and/or training completed by the mother at the time of the 20-year interview.

Mother's occupation refers to three divisions: 1 - the mother had been employed in a professional position such as a nurse, teacher, or lawyer at some time, 2 - the mother had never been employed in a professional position but had been employed in a semi professional capacity such as a dental assistance, secretary, or clerical worker at some time, 3 - the mother had either never been employed or had been employed in unskilled jobs.

Social assistance usage is a dicotomous variable with 1 being ever received social assistance and 0 being never received social assistance.

The longitudinal nature of the FMP also makes it possible to measure the **duration of mother's employment** over the course of the time the child was growing up. Values can range from 0 meaning the mother was never employed to 20 meaning the mother was employed continuously.

A more specific measure of community ties relates to the **involvement of the child and/or the mother in community groups and/or volunteer activities**. A principal components analysis of the youth's activities outside school time yielded the following index, with loadings of at least .6 and no loadings of alternative factors above .29.

- be a leader for any group or club such as Girl Guides, Scouts, Sunday School
- belong to a group or club for which you were not a leader
- do other volunteer work such as helping in a hospital

Each item was measured on a 4-point scale ranging from never to often. Chronbach's Alpha = .60.

Additionally, mothers provided information at both the 10 and 20 year data collections with respect to their participation in community groups and/or volunteer activities. This measure assumes a value of 0 if the mother was

not involved in community activities at either the 10 or 20 year data collections, a value of 1 if she was involved at the time of one but not both of the data collections, and a value of 2 if she was involved at both the 10 and 20 year data collections.

At the time of the 20 year data collection, **mother's were asked to reflect on their experiences during the teen years**. The teenage years are often a difficult time for families. Compared to other families you know, would you say you had a: very difficult, somewhat difficult, not very difficult, or not at all difficult time with [NAME] when [he/she] was a teenager?

The **youth's assessment of the school environment** included five component questions:

Overall when you were in [HIGH SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH] did you feel your teachers encouraged you to develop your skills and talents?

Over all when you were in [HIGH SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH], did you feel the teachers dealt with students fairly?

The following three questions about schooling were administered in split choice format:

In general when you were attending school did you:	
feel uncomfortable asking questions if you did not understand something	feel free to ask questions if you did not understand something
Generally, would you say your teachers:	
discouraged students from expressing their own opinions	encouraged students to express their own opinions
Overall, did you feel your teachers:	
thought you would not do well in life	thought you would do well in life

Each item was measured on a 5-point scale. Chronbach's Alpha = ..60